

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 PM-03 L-01 INR-05
CPR-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 PRS-01 SAB-01 /039 W
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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4543
THE WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 14328

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PN
SUBJECT: PANAMA CANAL AGREEMENT

REFS: (A) MEXICO 14254, (B) MEXICO 14002

1. SUMMARY: DESPITE MY DAILY REMINDERS TO FOREIGN SECRETARY ROEL THROUGHOUT THE WEEK, HE HAS FAILED TO GIVE ME ANY PRESIDENTIAL REACTION TO OUR REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF A SUPPORTIVE STATEMENT ON THE CANAL AGREEMENT OR TO OUR PROBE AS TO THE PRESIDENT'S WILLINGNESS TO ATTEND THE WASHINGTON SIGNING CEREMONY. THIS PROMPTED ME TO CONCLUDE THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY GETTING TO THE PRESIDENT ON THESE SUBJECTS. ROEL CONFIRMED THIS TO ME TODAY, AUGUST 26. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT GOM ULTIMATELY WILL RELEASE A SUPPORTIVE STATEMENT BUT I BELIEVE LOPEZ PORTILLO'S ATTENDANCE AT THE SIGNING CEREMONY IS UNCERTAIN. END SUMMARY.

2. FOREIGN SECRETARY ROEL TELEPHONED ME THIS MORNING TO ASK WHETHER I HAD AN ANSWER TO HIS INQUIRY AS TO WHICH CHIEFS OF STATE AND HEADS OF GOVERNMENT HAD INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO ATTEND THE SIGNING CEREMONY. I SAID I DID
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NOT YET HAVE THE INFORMATION HE REQUESTED. I SAID THAT, AS HE KNEW, GENERAL TORRIJOS WILL ATTEND. I SAID I HAD ALSO SEEN A.P. TICKER ITEMS FOR WHICH I COULD NOT VOUCH REPORTING THAT GENERAL PINOCHET OF CHILE AND GENERAL BANZER OF BOLIVIA WOULD ATTEND. ROEL SAID HE ALSO UNDERSTOOD STROESSNER WOULD ATTEND. HE ASKED ME TO SEND HIM ON AN URGENT BASIS THE TICKER ITEMS AND ANY OTHER INFOR-

MATION I MIGHT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN.

3. I TOOK THE OCCASION TO ASK ROEL WHETHER HE COULD TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT OUR REQUEST FOR MEXICAN RELEASE OF A SUPPORTIVE PUBLIC STATEMENT. THE SECRETARY SAID HE COULD NOT. UNFORTUNATELY HE HAD HAD ONLY THE BROEFEST CONTACT WITH THE PRESIDENT SINCE OUR REQUEST BECAUSE OF PRESIDENT'S INVOLVEMENT IN PREPARATION FOR HIS SEPTEMBER 1 STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE. ROEL SAID HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GIVE US AN ANSWER UNTIL HE HAD HAD THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION WITH THE PRESIDENT.

4. COMMENT: I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO WILL AUTHORIZE RELEASE OF A SUPPORTIVE PUBLIC STATEMENT, PROBABLY IN THE FORM OF HIS AUGUST 15 MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER, ONCE ROEL IS ABLE TO DISCUSS THIS WITH HIM, BUT I CANNOT PREDICT WHEN THAT WILL BE. I CONSIDER THE PROSPECTS FOR LOPEZ PORTILLO'S ATTENDANCE AT THE SIGNING CEREMONY UNCERTAIN.

5. ACTION: IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF I COULD PASS TO THE FOREIGN SECRETARY WHATEVER INFORMATION WE MAY HAVE ON ATTENDANCE AT THE SIGNING CEREMONY. THOMPSON

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